

Inspection of The WASP Centre

Brunel House, Mitchell Road, Salisbury SP2 7PY

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe, valued and cared for by staff. They develop strong relationships with staff that help them to focus on their learning. Leaders and staff have high expectations and aspirations for pupils. The school is transformative in helping pupils to believe in themselves and develop knowledge and skills for their next steps in education and work.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They want to succeed. Leaders have put in place clear behaviour systems, which pupils follow. Pupils state that any friendship issues are resolved by staff quickly. Although pupils' attendance has improved, it is still below where it should be. Leaders acknowledge that if pupils are not in school, they are not learning.

Leaders have established a rich curriculum that enables all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to succeed. For example, pupils learn about bicycle engineering and landscape gardening. Leaders create personalised curriculums for many pupils, particularly if they have gaps in their knowledge. For example, in mathematics, the teaching uses pupils' assessment information to help them learn more and remember more. The curriculum for English is effective, but pupils do not study reading texts in as much depth as they learn about writing skills.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff prioritise pupils' social and emotional mental health (SEMH) throughout the curriculum. Through the development of trusting relationships, pupils learn to re-engage with learning and school. One parent, in a comment typical of many, stated in the Ofsted questionnaire that the staff's 'skills and patience are commendable.' Pupils learn how to manage their SEMH so that they can learn successfully.

Leaders have established a well-sequenced curriculum that enables pupils to revisit their learning before they move on to new topics. For example, pupils reflect on their previous learning about hygiene when cooking pasta in food technology. Staff provide frequent feedback to pupils to help them improve their work. For example, in English, this helps pupils learn to develop their writing effectively. In art, pupils adapt their use of chalk to create light and shade. Similarly, in physical education (PE), pupils develop their skipping as a result of teachers' feedback. The curriculum is taught well to meet the individual needs of pupils. However, although pupils are fluent readers, teaching focuses more on writing than reading in English, which can limit pupils' knowledge about language and its impact.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that staff receive frequent training in how to meet the needs of these pupils. Consequently, staff are knowledgeable about SEND and use

information about pupils to personalise and adapt their teaching well. Teaching assistants help pupils to learn well through discussion and bespoke guidance.

Pupils typically behave well. Occasionally, some pupils misbehave, but leaders have put in place systems to address this. Pupils respond well to the ways in which staff model good behaviour. Pupils learn to manage their behaviour and adapt their use of language to fit different social settings. They are well prepared for life beyond school. For example, staff and pupils eat lunch together, enabling pupils to develop appropriate social skills.

Staff prepare pupils well for their next steps beyond Year 11. Pupils have a personalised programme that offers work experience and taster days in their chosen college. Staff guide pupils in their career decisions and help them to make the right subject choices. Pupils learn about the world around them through the curriculum. For example, they learn to value their community through working in the community garden. In assembly they discuss topical issues, such as the Afghanistan refugee crisis. However, leaders acknowledge that pupils need to attend school more frequently so that they do not develop gaps in their knowledge.

The trust provides robust challenge to leaders to ensure that pupils get the right support. Staff are unanimously proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that all pupils are physically and emotionally safe. Leaders liaise closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are protected. Leaders and staff regularly go beyond their statutory duty to make sure that pupils are safe, nurtured and nourished.

Staff receive regular and comprehensive safeguarding training. Leaders ensure that all staff are checked appropriately and are eligible to work with children and young people.

Leaders have ensured that their safeguarding policy is available on the school's website for parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Although pupils' attendance has improved, it is still below where it should be. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils, parents and carers understand the link between attendance and academic achievement.
- Although the curriculum is well sequenced and coherent, the curriculum for English focuses more on writing than on reading. Leaders need to ensure that pupils develop their reading skills as effectively as their writing skills.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	144514
DfE registration number	865/6046
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10201930
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Wessex Partnership Trust
Chair	Iain Russell
Headteacher	Carol Grant
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000
Telephone number	01722 786138
Website	www.waspcentre.com
Email address	cgrant@waspcentre.com
Date of previous inspection	15 to 17 May 2018

Information about this school

- The WASP Centre (the centre) provides education for up to 40 pupils aged 11 to 16.
- The centre opened on 16 May 2017.
- The centre is governed by the trustees of the Wessex Partnership Trust. The membership of the trust board is mainly drawn from senior leaders from secondary schools in and around Salisbury.
- Most pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools in Wiltshire. Some of the secondary schools that have dual placements with the centre have members who act as trustees.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspectors held a wide range of meetings during the inspection. These included meetings with the headteacher, trustees, school leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also held telephone discussions with a headteacher and a senior leader of local secondary schools that have pupils dual registered at the centre, a senior leader at the Wiltshire virtual school, and a parent.
- The inspectors looked closely at the following subjects when considering the quality of education: English, mathematics, food technology and personal, social, health and economic education. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and reviewed curriculum plans.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktimes, and as pupils moved around the school.
- The inspectors reviewed the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and accompanying free-text messages. They also considered the staff survey.
- The lead inspector checked the single central record and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.

- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and documents associated with the independent school standards. The lead inspector reviewed the school's website.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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